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ABSTRACT

This paper describes social problems that ethnic minorities are likely to experience in the 1980s and presents guidelines for shaping educational policies and programs that will help ethnic minority youths to experience more educational equity during the remainder of the decade. The minority groups discussed are those that are heavily concentrated below the poverty level and that experience enormous social, economic, and educational problems. Educational equity is defined in terms of output variables or the effects of schooling, rather than in terms of input variables such as expenditure per pupil and school facilities. Ethnic communities are likely to continue to be characterized by both a substantial lower class and a significant middle class throughout the 1980s. However, the rate of growth of the middle class ethnic community is likely to be slowed during much of the decade. The working class will remain a significant segment of ethnic communities. The following issues, which will continue to be important for the education of minorities throughout the 1980s, are discussed and policy issues related to them are presented: (1) teaching minority youths the basic skills; (2) teaching English to children who speak other first languages; (3) standardized testing of minority group populations; (4) minimal competency testing; (5) preschool care and educational programs; (6) private and public schools; and (7) ethnic studies programs in the nation's schools and colleges. (Author/RM)

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Social Problems and Educational Equity in the Eighties *

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* An overview paper prepared for presentation at a Working Meeting of the School Finance Project, United States Department of Education, 10-11 September 1981, Washington, D.C.

Abstract

The major goal of this paper is to describe the social problems that ethnic minorities are likely to experience in the 1980s and to present guidelines for shaping educational policies and programs that are likely to help ethnic minority youths to experience more educational equity during the remainder of the decade. The ethnic minority groups discussed in this paper are those that are heavily concentrated below the poverty level and that experience enormous social, economic, and educational problems. Educational equity is defined in terms of output variables or the effects of schooling, rather than in terms of input variables such as expenditure per pupil and school facilities. Using this concept, educational equity exists only when the educational outcomes are roughly equal for individuals from diverse ethnic and social class groups.

An attempt is made in this paper to describe the complex status of ethnic minorities and to predict their social and economic statuses for the rest of the decade. Ethnic communities are likely to continue to be characterized by both a substantial lower class and a significant middle class throughout the 1980s. However, the rate of growth of the middle class ethnic community is likely to be slowed during much of the decade. The working class will remain a significant segment of ethnic communities. Educational policy and programs should reflect the tremendous diversity within ethnic groups since the various populations within ethnic communities often have different needs, aspirations, and educational goals.

The following issues, which will continue to be important for the education of minorities throughout the 1980s, are discussed and policy issues related to them are presented: (a) teaching minority youths the basic skills, (b) teaching English to children who speak other first languages, (c) standardized testing of minority group populations, (d) minimal competency testing, (e) preschool care and educational programs, (f) private and public schools, and (g) ethnic studies programs in the nation's schools and colleges.

Forecasting the 1980s

As historians and social scientists, we are considerably more comfortable describing the past and present than forecasting the future. Describing the past and present is risky enough. Attempts to forecast the future are fraught with difficulties. However, the social scientist must use the same modes of inquiry to forecast alternative futures that are used to describe the past and present. In the final analysis, scientific forecasting must result from a reflective study and analysis of the best historical and current data. The results of scientific forecasting are similar in other ways to other social science inquiries. Social scientists are likely to disagree about possible events in the future as strongly as they disagree about current issues such as affirmative action, school desegregation, and whether the importance of race in the United States is declining or inclining (see Willie, 1979).

Because of the continuity of the past, present, and future, my venture into forecasting social problems and educational issues in the 1980s will begin with a description of historical and current developments related to the status of minorities in the United States. I will then make some

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reasoned predictions about the possible status of these problems and issues during the 1980s, and discuss their implications for the education of ethnic minorities. The major goal of this paper is to describe educational policies and guidelines that will help minority youths to experience increased educational equity in the 1980s. After examining policy alternatives and issues related to a problem, I will describe guidelines for shaping policies that are most likely to result in more educational equity for minority group populations.

Ethnic Minority Groups

The way in which ethnic minority youths and educational equity are defined in this paper needs to be clarified. I am using ethnic minority in a more limited way than I have used this concept in previous writings (Banks, 1979; Banks, 1981). I am primarily concerned with ethnic minorities who are members of groups that experience serious problems in the nation's schools, who are heavily represented among the unemployed, and who are highly concentrated in families that are below the poverty level. This definition excludes highly successful ethnic minority groups such as Jewish Americans, Japanese Americans, and Chinese Americans, but includes groups such as Blacks, Indians, Chicanos, and Puerto Ricans. The issues discussed in this paper are most pertinent to these four latter groups.

The focus on social problems related to Blacks, Chicanos, Indians, and Puerto Ricans is not meant to suggest that ethnic minority students who are

Japanese, Chinese, and Jewish do not experience problems in school or in the larger society. Students of American ethnicity, such as Sue (1981), Pang (1981), Kitano (1976), and Greenbaum (1974), have described many of the sociological and psychological factors that influence, often negatively, the experiences of these youths in school and in the larger society. However, these groups do not have the serious social, economic, and educational problems that characterize Blacks, Puerto Ricans, Chicanos, and Indians.

Educational Equity

The success that many middle class Black, Chicano, Indian, and Puerto Rican individuals experienced in the 1970s, and the acid debate over affirmative action, sometimes give the impression that these groups now experience equal educational opportunities. However, I am defining educational equity primarily in terms of educational outputs. This means that groups such Blacks, Chicanos, and Indians can be said to have equal educational opportunity only when the leading indicators of educational achievement, such as completion of college, scores on the College Board, and numbers in graduate school, are roughly equal to these indicators for Whites. This definition of educational equity focuses primarily on the results and effects of schooling rather than on input variables such as expenditure per pupil, teachers' salaries, and supplies (Coleman, 1969, pp. 9-24).

When using this definition to determine educational equity, the multiple indicators of educational attainment must be viewed as an interrelated whole. Any one measure of achievement can be misleading. By 1979, the per cent of Blacks completing high school approached 80 per cent of the percentage for Whites (Bureau of the Census, 1980, p. 149). This was up from 50 per cent of the percentage for Whites in 1970. This is a seemingly dramatic increase in educational equity for Blacks. However, when one looks at other indices of educational achievement, such as mean scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), and the per cent of Black and White college graduates in 1979, the gains in educational equity for Blacks since 1960 look less impressive. In 1969, the per cent of Blacks who completed four or more years of college was about 38 per cent of the percentage for Whites. In 1979, that per cent had increased to 46 (Bureau of the Census, 1980, p. 149). There were still substantial discrepancies between mean scores for Blacks and Whites on standardized tests such as the SAT and the College Board.

Thus, while the percentage gap between Blacks and Whites in completing high school closed substantially between 1960 and 1979, the gap in college completion closed only slightly. Wide gaps in Black and White achievement on standardized aptitude tests also remained.

It makes a tremendous difference, when designing educational policies, if educational equity is defined primarily in terms of <u>output</u> rather than <u>input</u> variables. When educational equity is conceptualized in terms of

output variables, equity has been attained when schools and colleges serving different socioeconomic and ethnic groups are equal in terms of variables such as teachers' pay, facilities, supplies, and mean expenditure for each child.

In the 1950s, after the Brown Decision, it was popular to define educational equity in terms of input variables because Black Southern schools had been unequal to White schools in terms of these variables since the "separate but equal" supreme court ruling in Plessy vs. Ferguson in 1896. After 1954, major efforts in the southern and border states were concentrated on obtaining equal pay for Black teachers, and equal supplies, textbooks, and facilities for Black schools.

Impressive gains were made in equalizing input variables for schools serving low income and minority group populations during the 1960s and 1970s. Many schools in economically depressed areas used funds authorized by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to make their input variables more equal to those of schools in more economically advantaged areas. By the end of 1979, the federal government had, under the authorization of this act, granted $23.2 billion to local school districts (Graham, 1980).

In 1966, the massive and controversial "Coleman Report" (Coleman et al., 1966) indicated that input variables such as school facilities and curriculum are not the most important correlates of academic achievement.

Coleman concluded that variables such as the verbal ability of teachers, the children's sense of control of their environment, and the educational background of the children's fellow classmates were the most important correlates of academic achievement.

The gains made in equalizing school input variables such as teachers' salaries and facilities during the 1960s and 1970s, the findings of the influential Coleman Report, and the continuing failure of many minority youths to attain educational parity with White middle class youths have made the input notion of educational equity insufficient for the 1980s. Increasingly during the 1960s and 1970s, educators realized that children who were socialized within a family and community culture highly incongruent with the culture of the schools were likely to experience more problems attaining academic success than children socialized in communities very similar to the school culture.

Consequently, in order for many Hispanic children socialized in the barrio to attain academic skills on parity with middle class Anglo youths, the school culture--which is primarily White and middle-class in its norms, goals, and expectations (Greenbaum, 1974)--has to make some major changes in the way it delivers educational services. Merely treating most Hispanic children "equal" or "the same" as White middle class children will not help many of them attain the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to function successfully within our highly technological society. Because of differences in motivational styles, languages, and values, Hispanic and Anglo stu-

dents may often have to be taught differently the same skills and knowledge (Gay, 1981; Vasquez, 1979).

In other words, children from some ethnic groups, because of their different historical, cultural, and social experiences, may have different educational entitlements and needs. To reflect cultural democracy and promote educational equity, the school may be required to treat some groups of children differently from other groups.

The Jews, the Japanese, and the Chinese have been very academically successful in the United States; yet, these groups have never experienced federally mandated bilingual programs in the public schools (each of these groups did establish private, after-school language schools). This does not necessarily mean, however, that many Hispanic children do not need bilingual education in order to attain educational parity with other students. Some Hispanic students may need bilingual programs while other may not.

To promote educational equity during the 1980s, it is essential for educators to formulate policy and programs based on an output conception of educational equity, to develop sophisticated and fair ways to determine educational entitlements and needs, and to formulate educational policy and programs that reflect the enormous diversity both between and within ethnic groups such as Blacks, Indians, and Chicanos.

Education and Schooling

Educational equity will exist in our nation when the leading indicators of educational attainment are about the same for all ethnic and social class groups. However, the common schools are only one of the important educational institutions in society. The family, the mass media, the community, the church, and the youth culture play important roles in educating our youths (Cremin, 1976). In some ways, these are more important educational institutions than schools.

Because the common school is only one of the important educational institutions in society, it is important for policy makers to realize both the possibilities and limitations of schools in bringing about equal educational opportunity. Schools can and should play cogent roles in educating our youths (Graham, 1980), despite the arguments by the revisionist historians and economists to the contrary (Bowles & Gintis, 1976; see Ravitch, 1978). However, it is limited in achieving its goals to the extent that other institutions promote norms, behaviors, and values that contradict those promoted by the school.

Within the last decade, the school has been handicapped in helping children to attain basic reading, writing, and mathematical skills because it has received little help or support from the family, the community, and from other important social institutions. The school's efforts to teach children American Creed values such as justice and equality are often

undercut by practices in the larger society that contradict those teachings. Admittedly, the public school has not distinguished itself by its efforts to promote American Creed values. Nevertheless, it rarely gets much community support or encouragement when it tries to teach them.

This paper necessarily focuses on the role of the common school in bringing about educational equity. However, federal policy makers should keep in mind the severe limitations under which schools work, the high expectations the public today has for the nation's public schools, and the entent to which the common schools are a reflection of society. Our high expectations for the common schools should be tempered by these realities.

Full educational equity for minority youths is not likely to be achieved until other institutions within society, in addition to the common schools, implement reforms that support those that are proposed in this paper for schools. We should also realize that the notion of equal educational opportunity itself is an ideal type and process concept. It is an ideal we should work toward and a continuing process.

The Complex Status of Minorities

It is difficult to describe the social, economic, and educational status of minorities today and to forecast their status for the rest of the decade. A brief review of the various studies and commentaries on the status and progress of Blacks since 1960 indicates the difficulty of this task.

Social sicentists, such as Wilson (1978) and Scammon and Wattenberg (1973), have focused on Black progress since the 1960s. Hill (1979b) discusses how Blacks have lost gains in the last two decades. Willie (1979) and Jones (1981) describe the complexity of the status of Blacks during the 1960s and 1970s.

These social scientists reached conflicting conclusions using similar data. Social scientists such as Willie and Jones, however, come closer to reality when they describe both the progress and regression Blacks have experienced since the 1960s. Other minorities, such as Chicanos, Indians, and Puerto Ricans, have also experienced progress and setbacks since the 1960s. Sowell (1981), in a Wall Street Journal editorial, discusses the extent to which some averagely qualified minorities were disadvantaged by affirmative action programs. He points out, however, that minorities with superior qualifications often benefited from these programs.

One of the problems in social science is that writers tend to describe ethnic minorities as monolithic groups, rather than as groups with enormous social class, regional, cultural, and linguistic diversity. One consequence of the tendency to describe these groups as monolithic is making oversimplified and misleading statements such as "Blacks made continuous progress during the 1960s and 1970s," "Chicanos steadily regressed during the 1970s," and "Indian children have low self-concepts."

These kinds of statements, which many social scientists make, frequently conceal more than they reveal and often reinforce harmful educa-

tional practices. Many educators accept the popular notion that nearly every Black and Chicano student is poor and often act on this premise. Other educators believe that almost all Chicano children speak barrio Spanish and need bilingual education to achieve in school.

During the 1980s, educational policy related to ethnic minorities should reflect the tremendous social class, regional, and cultural differences within ethnic groups. Most Puerto Ricans, Blacks, Chicanos, and Indians are at the lower rung of the social and economic ladder; yet there are significant middle classes within each of these groups that, to some extent, have different values, interests, behavior, and educational needs from their lower class kin.

While middle class ethnic individuals usually have a sense of peoplehood and identify with their ethnic groups, they also have strong social class interests that bind them in many ways to other middle class groups. Often middle class ethnic individuals find that their class interests conflict with their ethnic allegiances. Not infrequently, middle class ethnics find that their class interests are more important to them than their ethnic attachments. Middle class Blacks and Chicanos often move to suburban communities and send their children to private schools, not to enhance their ethnic identification, but to live in ways they consider consistent with their class status. Many middle class Black and Chicano parents are probably more interested in their children attaining the skills they need to get into Harvard or Stanford than they are in whether the

school is sympathetic to Black English or barrio Spanish. Middle class Black and Chicano parents are deserting the public schools as are White middle class parents. Ethnicity remains a cogent factor in American society; however, it is often mediated by class interests.

Shaping and implementing educational policy for minorities in the 1980s will become increasingly complex as more members of lower status ethnic groups join the middle class. This kind of class mobility increases the complexity of educating minorities because most middle class Blacks, Chicanos, and Puerto Ricans want to retain their ethnic identities, but at the same time they desire the full benefits and opportunities that are concomitant with their class status. Many middle class minority parents send their children to prestigious private elementary and high schools and encourage them to apply to Harvard, but at the same time expect them to be able to relate well to their cousins in the inner city and to be active (in the case of Blacks) in the Black church, which is a very ethnic institution. Educators focused their efforts on helping lower-status minority children during the 1960s and 1970s. Middle class minority children often became invisible, or the school assumed that they, too, were poor and "culturally deprived." Educators should be keenly sensitive to the class diversity within minority communities.

The Multiple Social Classes in Ethnic Communities

Despite the gains that minorities have experienced since the 1960s, there is still tremendous poverty among Blacks, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, and American Indians. The income gap between Whites, Blacks, and Spanish-origin persons remains wide. In 1978, the median income for Whites, Spanish-origin persons, and Blacks were, respectively, $18,368, $12,566, and $10,879 (Bureau of the Census, 1980, p. 452). Even though a higher percentage of Blacks had completed four years of high school than Hispanics, and had a higher median years of school completed, they had a lower median income.

Blacks fare worse on all of the important economic indicators than both Whites and persons of Spanish origin. Spanish-origin persons are far worse off economically than Whites of non-Spanish origin. In 1979, over 22 per cent of Black families earned less than $5,000 compared to 14.6 percent for persons of Spanish origin, and 6.5 per cent for Whites (Bureau of the Census, 1980, p. 466). The per cent of both Blacks and Whites who are below the poverty level has significantly decreased since 1959; yet the number of Blacks and Hispanics who remain at this level is substantial. In 1959, 18.1 per cent of Whites and 56.2 per cent of Blacks were below the poverty level. In 1969, those percentages had dropped to 8.9 and 30.9, respectively. In 1978, 2.6 per cent of persons of Spanish origin were below the poverty level (Bureau of the Census, 1980, p. 466).

The per cent of female-headed households has increased significantly for all American families since 1960. In 1960, 9.3 per cent of American families were headed by females. That per cent increased to 14.6 in 1979. During this same period, the per cent of White families with female heads increased from 8.1 to 11.6, and the per cent of Black familes with female heads increased from 20.9 to 40.5 (Bureau of the Census, 1980, p. 452).

In addition to revealing some significant changes in American society within the last two decades, the above statistics also reveal the sad economic plight of many Black Americans. The fact that the number of black families with female heads nearly doubled between 1960 and 1979 is an alarming and stark statistic. However, statistics such as this one do not reveal the total picture of Black America during the last two decades. There is a significant Black lower class that this kind of statistic describes. However, it does not describe the significant Black middle class that has grown since 1960.

There are large lower classes and significant middle classes in the Black, Puerto Rican, Chicano, and Indian communities. To describe some of these segments and not the others will result in the perpetuation of myths and stereotypes about ethnic communities. In 1979, 13.4 per cent of Black families earned over $25,000. In the same year, 7.9 per cent of the Black population had completed four or more years of college (Bureau of the Census, 1980, p. 149). Ten per cent of teachers, except college and university, were Black in 1979; 6.8 per cent of college and university teachers were Black (Bureau of the Census, 1980, p. 419).

There are, of course, other important segments and classes within ethnic minority communities other than the very poor and the middle class, such as laborers and kindred workers, sales workers, clerical and kindred workers, and craft and kindred workers. Families within these categories of workers make up substantial and important segments of ethnic communities. The educational needs of minorities within these social class groups also need to be considered when educational policy is shaped for the 1980s. In many working class ethnic families in which both parents work, their children do not qualify for special programs that benefit children from poorer families. Yet their families often do not have enough money and other resources to support educational experiences, enrichment activities, and college tuition for them as do middle class parents. Consequently, children from working class ethnic families are often at a disadvantage because they are from stable homes with two working parents, yet their parents do not make enough money to provide them with the educational opportunities they need and deserve.

Educational Issues in the 1980s

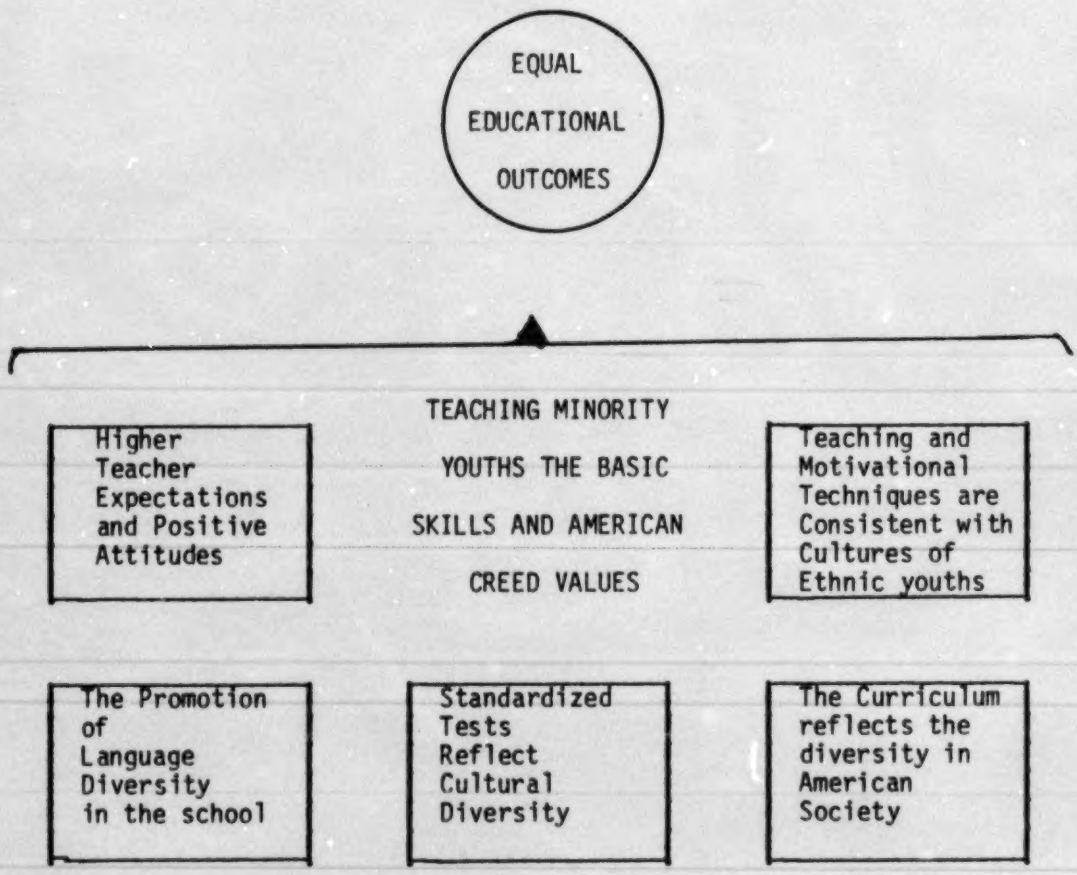
The first part of this paper describes the major concepts, ethnic minority youths and educational equity, and the projected status of minorities in the 1980s. This part describes educational issues related to minorities that will be of concern throughout the decade. Successful policies related to these issues must be implemented if ethnic minority students are to experience increased educational equity during the 1980s (see Figure 1).

Teaching Minority Youths the Basic Skills

Ways to help minority youths in all social class groups to attain basic skills in reading, mathematics, and writing will be an important educational issue throughout the 1980s. Because of many complex social reasons, including the fact that the schools are now graduating more students from high schools than ever before in the nation's history, including more minorities--American students often score lower on standardized measures of achievement than they did in the 1960s. The average score for college-bound seniors on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) consistently declined from 1967 to 1979 (Bureau of the Census, 1980, p. 164). However, as Graham (1980) points out, the general decline in American students' mean academic achievement is not as easy to describe as it is often assumed, and it has not been uniform across subject areas and grade levels. She writes:

Figure 1
School Variables that Promote Educational Equity

Educational Equity is conceptualized as equal achievement outcomes in this paper. However, it is hypothesized that the changes described in the squares are necessary for the school to help minority youths to attain skills and attitudes equal to those of other children.


EQUAL
EDUCATIONAL
OUTCOMES
TEACHING MINORITY
YOUTHS THE BASIC
SKILLS AND AMERICAN
CREED VALUES
Higher Teacher Expectations and Positive Attitudes
Teaching and Motivational Techniques are Consistent with Cultures of Ethnic youths
The Promotion of Language Diversity in the school
Standardized Tests Reflect Cultural Diversity
The Curriculum reflects the diversity in American Society

> Although the accusation [the failure to make students literate] is made universally, I believe the charge should be leveled principally at the junior and senior high schools. There the inadequacy in academic performance is most startling. The National Assessment of Educational Progress, which began testing a national sample of students in 1970, has recorded gains in reading achievement for nine-year-olds throughout the testing period. Declines have occurred, however, in writing, some kinds of reading, and in knowledge of science among thirteen-year-olds. Seventeen-year-olds have similarly shown declines in science and writing, while reading levels remain about the same. SAT scores, which ostensibly measure quite different matters, have also declined during the decade (p. 126-127).

Poor minority youths score less well on standardized measures of achievement than middle class White youths. They are probably more victimized by skill deficiencies than are White middle class youths. There are probably many complex reasons for the chronic unemployment rate among minority teenagers, including racial discrimination and the cultural differences between the teenagers seeking jobs and the employers. However, poor basic skills is probably a significant factor. In 1979, 13.9 per cent of White youths between the ages of 16 to 19 were unemployed. The per cent of unemployed minority youths between these ages was 33.6, which is more than double the per cent for Whites (Bureau of the Census, 1980, p. 398). Hill (1979a), however, seriously questions the extent to which skill deficiencies can explain the high unemployment rate among minority youths. He writes:

> The statistical evidence strongly contradicts the popular belief that persistent high unemployment among black youth is primarily due to their educational or skill deficiencies--when job opportunities are greater for white youth with lower educational attainment. White high school dropouts have lower unemployed rates (22.3%) than black youth with college education (27.2%). (pp. 78-79)

Defining the Basic Skills

Considerable controversy abounds, not only about the most effective ways to teach minority youths the basic skills, but about ways in which the concept of basic skills should be defined. Many active citizen groups have a limited concept of basic skills, by which they mean fundamental reading, writing, and mathematical skills. These groups have put considerable pressure on the public schools to define the basic skills in this limited way and to test students for their mastery of them. These pressure groups are likely to remain active throughout the 1980s.

Many professional educators believe that it is a serious mistake to define basic skills in such a way that they are limited to fundamental skills in reading, writing, and mathematics. They believe that these skills are very important, but are not sufficient to help children function as effective citizens in the next century. Other skills which educators consider essential are skills in reflective thinking, moral analysis, decision making, literary analysis, and social participation and action.

To function successfully within our complex society, students need to master the basic skills, conceptualized in a way that includes reading, writing, and mathematics, as well as other important skills. Youths who are members of groups that are victims of racial discrimination will especially need skills in decision making, social action, and reflective thinking if they are going to be able to bring about changes that will

further eliminate inequity in our society. Minority youths who have fundamental skills in reading, writing, and mathematics, but who have neither the ability nor the will to contribute to the enhancement of social justice in America, will be unable to make their maximum contributions to society. A federal policy which promotes a comprehensive view of basic skills and literacy is needed for the 1980s.

Theories for Teaching the Basic Skills to Minorities

Since the 1960s, several theories designed to help minority youths attain basic skills and other important learning outcomes have emerged. Each of these theories are based on particular assumptions and goals. Several of the more influential theories are discussed below and summarized in Table 1. However, absent are the genetic theory, popularized by Arthur R. Jensen (1969), the revisionist theory (Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Katz, 1975), and theories developed by writers such as Jencks et al. (1972). These latter theories have influenced educational thought but have had less impact on educational practice than the theories described in Table 1.

Jensen (1969) focuses on the limits that heredity places on minority children's abilities to achieve at high levels. The revisionists, and writers such as Jencks et al. (1972), emphasize the limited effects of schooling. None of these theories, including those discussed below, are mutually exclusive. Cultural deprivation teaching strategies, for example,

can be used in a desegregated school. Cultural difference teaching techniques can enhance the effectiveness of desegregated classrooms. However, these theories, summarized in Table 1, are sufficiently different to warrant conceptual distinctions.

The Cultural Deprivation Theorists

Cultural deprivation was one of the first theories concerned with the education of lower class students to emerge in the 1960s. Cultural deprivation theorists assume that lower class youths are not achieving well in school because of family disorganization, poverty, the lack of effective concept acquisition, and because of other intellectual and cultural deficits which these children experience during their first years of life.

Cultural deprivation theorists assume that a major goal of school programs for "culturally deprived" children is to provide them with cultural and other experiences that will compensate for their cognitive and intellectual deficts. Deprivation theorists assume that lower class children can learn the basic skills taught by the schools, but that these skills must often be taught using intensive, behaviorally oriented instruction (Bereiter & Engelmann, 1966). Write Bereiter and Englemann:

> From the beginning there is a lag in learning that must be overcome if disadvantaged children are to emerge from school with the same skills and knowledge as more privileged children. If the lag is to be made up during the school years, then schools for disadvantaged children have to provide higher-quality instruction and faster-paced education than that provided for advantaged children. Another possible solution is to

Table 1

THEORIES FOR THE EDUCATION OF ETHNIC MINORITY GROUPS

Theory	Major Assumptions	Major Goals	Some Major Researchers
Cultural Deprivation	The cultures in which lower class youths are socialized are deprived. Consequently, these students have serious cognitive deficits when they enter school. Intensive instruction is needed for these children to perform on parity with other children.	To compensate for the cognitive and emotional deficits that lower class youths have by providing them with cultural experiences that will enrich their languages, enhance their concept attainment abilities, and augment their self-concepts. To increase the academic achievement of disadvantaged youths by providing them with intensive, behaviorally oriented instruction.	Betty Caldwell Carl Bereiter Martin Deutch Siegfried Engelman Frank Reissman
Integration	The most important correlate of academic achievement for minority youths is the social class composition of the school. Racial integration not only improves the performance of minority children, but has important positive social outcomes for both minority and majority group children. It helps	To increase the achievement of minority group children by placing them in desegregated school environments To improve the racial attitudes and human relations skills of all children so that various ethnic and racial groups will live in our society more harmoniously.	Robert L. Green Thomas F. Pettigrew Ray C. Rist Charles V. Willie

Table 1 (continued)
THEORIES FOR THE EDUCATION OF ETHNIC MINORITY GROUPS

Theory	Major Assumptions	Major Goals	Some Major Researchers
Integration Cont.	students to develop the social skills and racial attitudes needed to live in a multiracial and multiethnic society.		
Cultural Difference Cultural Pluralism Bicultural	Minority youths have rich and diverse ethnic cultures that have values, languages, and behavioral styles that are functional for them and valuable for American society	To change the school so that it respects and legitimizes the cultures of children from diverse ethnic groups. To make use of the cultures of ethnic youths to successfully teach them the basic skills and the values needed to make changes within our society to make it more consistent with American Creed values.	Roger D. Abrahams Joan C. Baratz Courtney B. Cazden Asa G. Hilliard, III William Labov John U. Ogbu Jane R. Mercer Manuel Ramirez Muriel Saville-Troike
Multicultural	Minority youths should become multicultural--able to function successfully within the mainstream society within their own ethnic community and within other ethnic subsocieties.		

> provide this kind of education before the school years--the motivating idea for preschool education for disadvantaged children (p. 6).

The landmark and widely quoted publication that articulates the assumptions, methods, and goals of the cultural deprivation approach is The Culturally Deprived Child by Frank Reissman (1962). Another important publication in the movement resulted from the "Research Conference on Education and Cultural Deprivation," held at the University of Chicago, 8-12 June 1964. This conference, which was supported by the U.S. Office of Education, was attended by leading social scientists and educators. The major goal of the conference was to describe the problems of educating "disadvantaged" populations, and to make policy recommendations to local, state, and national agencies.

In the book based on the conference, Compensatory education for cultural deprivation (Bloom, Davis, & Hess, 1965), the authors describe the unique characteristics of culturally deprived children:

> We refer to this group as culturally disadvantaged or culturally deprived because we believe the roots of their problem may in large part be traced to their experiences in homes which do not transmit the cultural patterns necessary for the types of learning characteristic of the schools and the larger society (p. 4).
>
> A large proportion of these youths come from homes in which the adults have a minimal level of education. Many of them come from homes where poverty, large family size, broken homes, discrimination, and slum conditions further complicate the picture (p. 5).
>
> What is needed to solve our current as well as future crises in education is a system of compensatory education [emphasis added] which can prevent or overcome earlier deficiencies in the development of each individual (p. 6).

Most of the compensatory educational programs that emerged during the 1960s, such as Head Start, Follow-Through, and Upward Bound, were strongly undergirded by the assumptions, goals, and methods of the cultural deprivation theorists. Carl Bereiter and Seigfried Engelmann (1966) developed a widely used method to teach young children basic skills in mathematics, reading, and the language arts. Some of the assumptions that underlie their program are evident in the following statement about the intellectual abilities of lower class youths:

> On general intelligence tests, disadvantaged children typically have 5 to 15 IQ points below average. An average of 15 points on such scales is grave indeed, and it is found regularly among Southern Negro children and appears to be characteristics of Puerto Rican immigrant children. Such a deficit places the average of the group on what is now coming to be considered the borderline of mental deficiency, [emphasis added], so that roughly half of the children in such groups fall into the mentally retarded range (Bereiter & Englemann, 1966, p. 4).

The Integrationists

Another group of social science and educational theorists argue that the most effective way to help minority youths to attain higher levels of academic achievement is to place them in higher status, racially integrated schools. The integrationists, citing data gathering by Coleman (1966), in his massive study, Equality of Educational Opportunity, and the reanalysis of the Coleman data by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (1967), chaired by Thomas F. Pettigrew, argue that the social class and racial composition of the school are the most important correlates of academic achievement for

Black and other minority students. Another important goal of the integrationists is to improve the racial attitudes and human relations skills of both Anglo and ethnic minority students so that they can live more harmoniously in our pluralistic society. Robert L. Green (1977), a leading integration theorist, comments on the positive benefits of school desegregation:

> The findings on changes in achievement following desegregation indicate that black student achievement will improve, and white student achievement will be unchanged or may show improvement. There are also other reasons that desegregation is in our best interests. The Kerner Commission warned that unless children of different races had the opportunity to interact in the educational setting, the racial attitudes produced by three centuries of myth, ignorance, and bias would be perpetuated. J. Kenneth Morland has shown that by the end of high school in a segregated school system, black children develop favorable attitudes about their own racial group but highly unfavorable attitudes about whites. Similarly, white children consistently show, from elementary school through high school, a favorable ranking of their own race and unfavorable ranking of blacks . . . . There is reason to hope . . . that integration in our school systems may foster more tolerance for and understanding of cultural and racial differences in society. The improvements in interracial attitudes can be both immediate and long lasting (p. 227).

The integrationist's strategy for improving the education of minority children evoked considerable controversy during the 1970s, and experienced a number of setbacks in major cities in the North and West because of the strong opposition to school desegregation among diverse social class and ethnic groups. Coleman et al. (1975) strongly challenged the integrationist's theory by arguing that school desegregation drives Whites from the cities, resulting in the resegregation of city schools. Derrick Bell

(1980) believes that desegregated schools are often hostile places for Black students. Despite the attacks and setbacks they experienced during the 1970s, the integrationist theorists, such as Pettigrew and Green (1976) and Rist (1978), continue to discuss the positive consequences they believe school integration can have for both minority and majority group children.

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (1976) strongly supports school desegregation. Through its conferences and publications, the commission tries to balance much of the negative publicity given in the popular press to school desegregation by describing school districts in which desegregation has been successfully implemented, such as in Seattle, Washington and in Little Rock, Arkansas. Writes the commission (1976, p. 8), "Despite the publicity given to violence in Pontiac, Boston, and Louisville, numerous communities have implemented the law peacefully. Although largely ignored by politicians and the national press, these communities represent in many ways the real story of desegregation today."

The Cultural Difference Theorists

Categorizing the cultural pluralism, bicultural, and multicultural theorists into one group is, to some extent, misleading since there are important differences among these theorists. Cultural pluralists, such as Barbara A. Sizemore (1973) and Derrick Bell (1980), for example, are often strong critics of the effects of school desegregation; whereas bicultural

theorists, such as Alfredo Castaneda and Manuel Ramirez (1974), rarely discuss school desegregation.

Categorizing these theorists into one group is done here because of the beliefs, assumptions, and goals they share, and because it is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss their works in length. All of these theorists strongly reject the assumptions of the cultural deprivation theorists and argue that educational programs for minorities should be based on different premises.

The cultural pluralism, bicultural, and multicultural theorists are cultural difference theorists who reject the idea that minority youths have cultural deficits. They argue that ethnic groups such as Blacks, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, and Indians have strong, rich, and diverse cultures. These cultures, argue the cultural difference theorists, consist of languages and dialects that are rich and elaborate (Smitherman, 1977), and of values, behavioral styles, and perspectives that can enrich the lives of all Americans (Forbes, 1973). Ethnic minority youths, argue these theorists, fail to achieve highly in school not because they have deprived cultures but because they have cultures that are different from the school's culture (Baratz & Baratz, 1970).

Cultural difference theorists believe that the schools often fail to help minority children to achieve at high levels because they ignore their cultures and rarely use teaching technique and styles that are consistent

with the culture, lifestyles, and values of minority youths. Research by bicognitive theorists suggests that ethnic minority and Anglo-American students often differ in their cognitive styles and that most teachers have cognitive styles that match those of Anglo-American students (Ramirez & Castañeda, 1974).

Ramirez and Castañeda (1974) have found that Mexican American youths tend to be more field-sensitive than field-independent in their cognitive styles. Anglo American students tend to be more field-independent. Field-sensitive and field-independent students differ in behavior and characteristics. Field-sensitive students tend to like to work with others to achieve a common goal and are more sensitive to the feelings and opinions of others than are field-independent students. Field-independent students prefer to work independently and to compete and gain individual recognition. Students who are field-independent are more often preferred by teachers and tend to get higher grades. Research on motivational styles (Vasquez, 1979), language (Labov, 1970), and patterns of mental abilities (Stodolsky & Lesser, 1967), also describe important differences in Anglo and ethnic minority youths which have important pedagogical implications.

Theories for Educating Minorities in the 1980s

The cultural deprivation theory was the most frequently discussed, and presumably the most widely used, theory for educating lower class minority youths during the 1960s, especially after passage of the Elementary and

Secondary Education Act (1965), which provided millions of dollars for educational reform. The Coleman Report, issued in 1966, gave further impetus to the integrationist's strategy for improving the educational achievements of minority students. The cultural difference theories arose to challenge the cultural deprivation position. Valentine's book, Culture and poverty: Critique and counter-proposals (1968), was one of the first important theoretical statements to reject the cultural deprivation theory.

Each of these theories are being used to educate lower class and minority youths. This trend is likely to continue during the remainder of the decade. The cultural deprivation theory, which was harshly criticized during the late 1970s by many ethnic minority scholars, is likely to gain more legitimacy during the 1980s because of the heavy emphasis today on concepts such as "the economic underclass" and "female-headed household." The integrationist theory is likely to experience continued setbacks during the 1980s. Research related to cultural differences theories is likely to continue during the 1980s, although the advocates of these theories are likely to have increasingly less influence in the national media and in educational circles throughout the 1980s.

Federal policy should encourage the development, testing, and evaluation of diverse theories for educating minority youths. Approaches and strategies that are encouraged by the federal government should respect the rich cultural diversity of minority children, encourage schools to legitimatize the cultures of these students, and promote the democratic ideals of the nation state.

Teaching English to Children who Speak Other First Languages

The 1980 census indicates that there are over 14 million Hispanics in the United States. Because of the high birthrate among this population and the continuing immigration from Mexico, the number of Hispanics is likely to increase significantly during the 1980s. Many Hispanic children are reared in homes where the first language spoken is Spanish. Many children who are members of other ethnic groups, especially the recent Asian immigrants, are also raised in homes in which languages other than English are spoken. Throughout the 1980s, the issue of how best to teach English and the other basic skills to linguistic minority students will be an important and controversial issue.

Approaches to teaching English to students who speak other languages range from the strongly assimilationist "English Only" approach, to a method that tries to maintain students' native languages while teaching them English. Prior to the educational reforms of the 1960s, a strongly assimilationist view of languages other than English was pervasive in the public schools. A "No Spanish Rule" was often harshly enforced in many schools in Texas and in other parts of the Southwest. Children who were caught speaking Spanish during the school day were frequently punished and ridiculed.

The "Teaching English as a Second Language" approach is assimilationist-oriented since maintenance of the students' first languages is not an

important goal. Rather, the students' native languages are used as vehicles to help them learn standard English.

The "Bilingual-Bicultural" approach differs from both of the preceding approaches since its goal is to have students master standard English while at the same time maintaining and improving their native languages (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1975). Another important goal of this approach is to help students learn more about both of the cultures in which the two languages are imbedded.

A federal policy is needed in the area of second language education that will serve the best interests of language minority students and language majority students, as well as the nation state. The "English Only" approach is probably unacceptable to many Americans today because it blatantly violates cultural democracy and fairness. The "Teaching English as a Second Language" approach can help students to learn standard English; however, children may lose their native languages with this approach.

The "Bilingual-Bicultural" approach seems to offer the most benefits to all groups of students and to the nation. It helps language minority students to maintain competency in their first languages and cultural ties with their ethnic communities. In effective bilingual-bicultural programs, both the minority languages and English are taught to both language minority and language majority students. Both groups of students also learn more about each other's culture. By acquiring a second language, language

majority students become more ethnically literate, better able to function effectively within diverse cultural settings, and better able to understand and appreciate their own unique cultural and linguistic characteristics. There is a tremendous need for our nation's citizens to increase their language competency and literacy. The President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies (1979) wrote cogently about the cultural and linguistic illiteracy that plagues the nation. The commission wrote:

> Nothing less is at issue than the nation's security. At a time when the resurgent forces of nationalism and of ethnic and linguistic consciousness so directly affect global realities, the United States requires far more reliable capacities to communictae with its allies, analyze the behavior of potential adversaries, and earn the trust and sympathies of the uncommitted. Yet, there is a widening gap between these needs and the American competence to understand and deal successfully with other peoples in a world of flux.

Standardized Testing

Ethnic minorities, such as Blacks, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, and Indians, continue to score far below Whites on I.Q. and other standardized tests. Consequently, they are frequently placed in low academic tracts where teachers have low academic expectations for them. Students do not achieve at their highest possible levels with these expectations and negative attitudes (Leacock, 1969). Research by multicultural theorists such as Jane R. Mercer (1974) and Robert L. Williams (1974) indicates that minorities often score poorly on standardized measures of academic aptitude, not because they actually have less academic potential than White students but because they are not "test wise," and because these tests use

examples from the mainstream culture, which most of these students do not know as well as they know their own cultures.

Mercer (1974) summarizes some of her research that documents the harmful effects that standardized testing often has on minority group children.

> There were four-and-a-half times more Mexican-American children and twice as many Black children labeled mentally retarded as would be expected in the school population, and only half as many Euro-American children . . . . These objective consequences reveal one of the latent functions of I.Q. testing in the public schools--the maintenance of the subordinate social position of certain minority groups. The educational system functions as a primary institution in allocating persons to adult social statuses (p. 82-83).

Despite their harmful consequences for many minority group children, more rather than fewer standardized tests are likely to be given to all groups of students during the 1980s. Increasingly, the results of these kinds of tests will be used to make important decisions about students at earlier and earlier points in their lives. As colleges are forced to cut enrollments because of declining resources, they are likely to require increasingly higher standardized scores for admissions and placement. Thus, minorities are likely to be especially victimized during the 1980s by standardized tests and test results. Federal policies need to address this important problem if many of the educational opportunities gained by minorities during the 1960s and 1970s are not going to be deeply eroded.

Attempts to end the testing of minority students is probably not a reasonable policy to pursue. Standardized tests are institutionalized in most schools and colleges, and important decisions are based on them.

Researchers such as Williams (1974) and Mercer (1974) attempted to develop alternative measures for minority group populations. While the results of these efforts are promising, considerably more attention needs to be devoted to alternative ways to identify promising minority students and those who need educational remediation. Existing standardized aptitude tests often do not reveal the high academic aptitude of many minority group students. This is a serious and continuing problem which merits considerable discussion, research, and action at the local, state, and federal levels.

Minimal Competency Testing

The issue of minimal competency testing will continue to be an important and controversial issue in the 1980s. This movement emerged largely as a response to the public outcry and disappointment over the constantly declining scores of high school graduates on the Scholastic Aptitude Test and other measures of academic achievement. Data produced by the National Assessment of Educational Progress program has enabled Americans to keep a constant eye on the educational progress of a national sample of students.

The many complex factors that have contributed to the constantly declining scores of students has not been well understood by the public. Consequently, the public is demanding that schools define a minimal level of competency for high school graduates and require graduates to attain these competencies. This issue will remain problematic in the 1980s

because educators are having a difficult time determining a definition of "minimal competency," and in assessing minimal competency skills in the basic skills area. Many leaders are concerned that the initiation of minimal competency testing on a large scale will substantially reduce the number of minority youths who will be able to graduate from high school, and consequently will further deny them job opportunities. Federal assistance is needed in this area to help communities to resolve this problem in a way that is satisfactory to the public and yet that enhances rather than denies minority and other youths equal education opportunities.

Preschool Care and Educational Programs

Since the 1960s, the number of female heads of households has substantially increased. Also, the number of women in the work force has increased. These trends are likely to continue during the 1980s because of changing values, lifestyles, and because of the pernicious effects of an inflated economy.

As more families become headed by females and as more women gain full-time employment, the issue of parenting and day care for preschool children will become an increasingly important social and educational issue. This problem is especially acute in the Black community, where the per cent of female-headed households increased from 20.9 to 40.5 from 1960 to 1979.

This problem is further complicated by the possibility that welfare reform during the 1980s may make it necessary for many mothers on welfare

to gain full-time work. Children experience critical development points, both cognitively and emotionally, during their first years of life. Preschool and daycare programs in the United States vary tremendously in quality, and in general are not consistent with the quality of the other levels of education in the nation.

Alternative models for providing effective day care for young children need to be developed, tested, and evaluated. Models where private industry assumes a major responsibility for the day care needs of its workers need to be studied and examined for their possible contribution to an effective solution to this problem. Because of declining enrollments in most public schools systems throughout the United States, many school districts have vacated buildings that might be converted to successful centers for preschool programs sponsored by other agencies and institutions.

Private and Public Schools

About 10 per cent of the elementary and high school students in the United States attend private schools. This per cent is likely to increase during the 1980s because of the public's rising disillusionment with the perceived quality of the nation's public schools. The recent study by Coleman, Hoffer, and Kilgore (1981) provides research support for many of the widely held premises about private schools. These researchers concluded that (a) private schools produce better cognitive outcomes than public schools, (b) private schools provide a safer, more disciplined, and

more ordered environment than do public schools, and (c) non-Catholic private schools have lower teacher/student ratios than do public schools. However, Catholic schools have higher teacher/student ratios than do public schools. These researchers also concluded that non-Catholic private school students have both higher levels of self-esteem and fate control than students in public or Catholic schools.

The policy issues related to private and public schools are made more complex by other findings in the Coleman study. Private schools enroll a smaller percentage of Black students than do the public schools, but Black students are more segregated in public than in private schools. Private schools are also strongly divided along religious lines. While the majority of Catholics attend public schools, over 90 per cent of the students who attend Catholic schools are Catholic. Coleman et al. also found that private schools have a narrow range of extracurricular activities and fewer course offerings in vocational and other nontraditional subject areas.

Coleman et al. believe that their research findings provide more support for policies that will increase rather than decrease the role of private schools in American education. They write:

> It is hard, however, to avoid the overall conclusion that the factual premises underlying policies that would facilitate the use of private schools are much better supported on the whole than those underlying policies that would constrain their use. Or, to put it another way, the constraints imposed on schools in the public sector . . . seem to impair their functioning as educational institutions, without providing

> the more egalitarian outcomes that are one of the goals of public schooling (p. xxix).

The Coleman et al. study added fuel to a fire that was already burning over issues related to public and private schools. Many professional educators harshly criticized Coleman et al.'s findings and argued that the study was designed to undercut support for the public school and to bolster the growing political support for tax credits for private school tuition. Supporters of private schools have eagerly endorsed the findings and often cite them in public forums. However, the issues concerning the role of private and public schools in American education are far larger and more complex than the Coleman et al. study, and are likely to demand a considerable amount of public attention in the 1980s.

Government policies should be devised that will promote pluralism in American education, and yet try to improve the public schools (and/or the public perceptions of them), so that public confidence in public education can be restored and the desertion of the public schools by the middle class will be slowed. Middle class parents from diverse racial and ethnic groups are deserting the public schools in increasing numbers because they are losing faith in the public school's ability to teach their children the basic skills and to help them acquire values they deem important.

Coleman et al.'s study (1981) indicates that:

> At the middle and higher income levels, the increase in probability of enrollment of blacks with increase in income is higher than that of whites. At virtually all income levels, both the probability of

> enrollment of Hispanics and the increase in that probability with income are higher than for non-Hispanic Whites (p. xxviii).

This evidence suggests that middle class minorities may be more eager to send their children to private schools than are Whites with comparable incomes.

Unless decisive steps are taken to improve the public perception of the nation's common schools, restore confidence in them among middle class populations, and make them safer places for children and teachers, the exodus of middle class parents from the public schools is likely to escalate during the 1980s. If this happens, within a few decades, our public schools will be attended primarily by White and minority poor. This would be a serious consequence for our nation. The public school is one of the few institutions in our society where there is still the possibility that children can be brought together to learn the ideals of American democracy within the context of racial, ethnic, and social class diversity. Admittedly, the school has not come anywhere near to fulfilling this possibility. However, the dream still lives.

Ethnic Studies Programs

One result of the ethnic revitalization movements of the 1960s and 1970s was the establishment of ethnic studies programs within the common schools and colleges and/or the inclusion of ethnic content into the mainstream curricula of these institutions. Advocates of ethnic studies

programs and curricula argued, during the first phase of these programs, that ethnic studies courses and programs were needed to help minority youths to gain a sense of pride in their past and to better understand the experiences of their peoples. As these programs were developed, however, educators increasingly began to state that the information and concepts they taught were beneficial for all students and not just for ethnic minorities.

Courses and programs related to ethnic studies also became more scholarly and intellectually rigorous during the late 1970s and early 1980s. This trend will continue. In the 1980s, because of declining resources and the low status that ethnic studies courses programs typically have within their institutions, and because of the conservative political atmosphere in the nation, ethnic studies face the possibility of severe reductions in most institutions and elimination in others. Policies need to be devised and implemented that will help educators assess the status of these programs and courses, determine their strengths and weaknesses, and ascertain which aspects of them should be retained and which can make the best contribution to educational equity and the liberal education of all students in the nation's common schools and colleges.

Summary

While it is difficult for social scientists to forecast the future, the same inquiry modes that are used to describe the past and present must be used to depict possible futures. An examination of the past and present status of ethnic minority groups that have enormous social, economic, and educational problems suggests that their status will not change significantly during the remainder of the decade. These groups are likely to be characterized by a large lower class and a significant middle class throughout the 1980s. However, the rate of growth of the middle class within ethnic minority communities is likely to be slowed for much of the decade. The working class will also remain a significant segment of ethnic communities.

Educational policy and programs during the 1980s should be designed to increase educational equity for minority group populations. Equity should be defined primarily in terms of the results of schooling. To help minorities experience increased educational equity in the 1980s, educational policy should reflect the enormous diversity both between and within ethnic groups. The following educational issues require attending and effective policies if minorities are to experience increased educational equity in the 1980s: (a) teaching minority youths the basic skills, (b) teaching English to children who speak other first languages, (c) standardized testing of minority group students, (d) minimal competency testing,

(e) preschool care and educational programs, (f) private and public schools, (g) ethnic studies programs.

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